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JAN. 17 RWANDA OPERATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP MEETING
Ideas for Promoting Dialogue

RELEASED IN FULL

BACKGROUND

There has been no real movement on the political front since the last Friends meeting. The composition of the Rwandan government is unchanged, and we are not aware of any current contacts between the GOR and members of the Hutu diaspora. Exiled former Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye, from a "conservative" (but apparently not extremist) wing of Twagiramungu's MDR party, has suggested the RPF is trying to return Rwanda to Tutsi rule. Even Twagiramungu's wing has criticized the RPF for deviating from the Arusha accords.

At the January 7 Nairobi summit (which included Bizimungu), the regional leaders commended the GOR for steps to create a broad-based administration, but also urged the GOR to deepen the effort in the spirit of Arusha. The summit also called on the GOR and RPA to put in place additional confidence-building measures to encourage voluntary return of refugees. It remains to be seen whether pressure from the neighbors can be effective in persuading the GOR to become more inclusive.

There is still little incentive for the GOR to reach out, or for key figures in the diaspora to return. Recent ex-FAR incursions into western Rwanda and apparent Interhamwe activity around the IDP camps only reinforce the GOR's (RPF's) tendency to put security concerns ahead of reconciliation. The GOR's recent operation to replace the old currency with new bills will undoubtedly have the intended effect of undercutting the power structure of the refugee camps, but the question remains whether innocent refugees who decide to return permanently to Rwanda after the operation is over will be allowed to exchange some amount of old notes. So far, the GOR seems to have resisted this idea, which could complicate repatriation and reconciliation efforts even further.

At the last ROSG meeting, we floated the idea of a UN envoy to stimulate political dialogue between the GOR and innocent diaspora leaders who have a constituency among the refugee population. Some ROSG members expressed concern about duplicating Khan's work or stepping on the toes of the neighbors, particularly Tanzania, which served as political facilitator at Arusha. However, Khan probably has too many other responsibilities and may be too closely tied to the GOR to be viewed as an honest broker by the diaspora. Up to now, Tanzania and the neighbors have been unable to come up with much other than one-day summits (or near summits) which have produced little on the political front. It remains to be seen whether the planned regional refugee conference in Bujumbura can build on the agreements in Nairobi. At the last ROSG meeting, we welcomed any ideas for jump-starting the political dialogue and promised to circulate any ideas we received from other ROSG members before the Geneva meeting. So far, we have received no proposals.

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- 2 -

TALKING POINTS

- We have seen no real movement on the political front. In the end, the crisis will not be resolved without some political accommodation.
- The Nairobi summit, in which Rwanda participated, reaffirmed the need to continue efforts to broaden the GOR's administration. While this is the sort of message we want to see coming from the GOR and its neighbors, it remains to be seen whether the wishes expressed at the summit can be effectuated.
- One part of the dialogue equation is creating conditions within Rwanda that will encourage valid interlocutors for the GOR to come forward. UNAMIR, the human rights monitors, and assistance to the GOR, particularly in the area of administration of justice, are all important elements in this effort.
- However, creating the conditions is only part of the equation. Some process must exist which will facilitate the dialogue between the GOR and innocent diaspora leaders and between the RPA and acceptable elements of the ex-FAR.
- At this early stage, face-to-face negotiations in a formal Arusha-style process is unrealistic. Contacts will probably have to be made through some facilitator.
- The facilitator would have to devote his or her full effort to the task, which would make it difficult for SRSK Khan to undertake the task. In addition, the facilitator must be viewed as an honest broker by the GOR and the diaspora. For these reasons, the facilitator probably should not be based in Kigali or other locations perceived as non-neutral by one side or the other.
- The tough question is this: between whom (or what factions) will the facilitator facilitate dialogue?
- When the Tribunal begins its work and indictments start to come down, it will be easier to identify valid (i.e., innocent) interlocutors for the GOR. The GOR may also be more willing to reach out and consider other confidence-building initiatives, once it is satisfied that the international community intends to go after the main wrongdoers.
- In the interim, a facilitator could consult with respected Rwandans inside and outside Rwanda in an effort to examine how a dialogue might best be fostered and who might be involved in such a dialogue.

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